



Local committee presents awards to disabled APG employees

**Story and photo by
Mike Cast
DTC**
Two hearing-impaired

Aberdeen Proving Ground employees received accolades Oct. 20 for their accomplishments in the public sector.

The Harford County Committee on Employment presented this year's Harford County Employee of the Year



Thomas Martin conducts electromagnetic interference testing on radios and other electronic equipment used in systems such as tactical military vehicles.

Two retire during October ceremony

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

With 60 years of service to the nation between them, two seasoned Soldiers bid farewell to their military careers during a Retirement Ceremony at Top of the Bay Oct. 26.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry D. Robinson, of the U.S. Army Developmental Test Command, and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Rodney K. Rollman, of the U.S. Army Materiel Command at Fort Belvoir, Va., were awarded the Legion of Merit as they ended their 30-year careers among family, friends and co-workers..

Brig. Gen. Michael L. Combest, commander of DTC, presided over the ceremony and award presentations.

Combest said that Robinson, as DTC's top noncommissioned officer, had "reached the pinnacle of our profession," and that his retirement was "an absolute commitment to our Soldiers and our Army come to fruition."

"On behalf of all of us, thank you for what you've done over 30 years for our Soldiers and for our Army," Combest said. "We are proud to have served with you and we are proud to have known you. I wish you the very best and thank you for your service. God speed."

Of Rollman, Combest said that as a logistician he had one of the "toughest and most thankless jobs in the Army."

"No matter how fast you get it there, it's never good enough," he said. "Anyone who can endure 30 years and 19 moves and serve with everything he has deserves a brilliant future. Thank you for your service and God speed."

The retirees also received the Department of the Army Certificate of Retirement and the Presidential Certificate of Appreciation.

Their spouses received the Department of the Army Certificates of Appreciation.

In addition, Combest presented Linda Robinson with the DA Civilian Award for Public Service and the command sergeant major presented flowers to his family members and his aide, Sgt. Joyce Chappell.

"APG has been great to me and my family," Robinson said. "I'm blessed to have had such a supporting wife and family."

Rollman, who served on APG from 1978 to 1982, said that he was grateful to his family who supported him as he made the transition from enlisted to warrant.

"It's been an honor to have worn the uniform," Rollman said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry D. Robinson

A native of Bainbridge, Ga., Robinson entered the Army in January 1975. His past assignments include Fort Hood, Texas; Camp Humphreys, Korea; Camp Casey, Korea; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Germany, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. Robinson completes his career as the command sergeant major of APG's U.S. Army Developmental Test Command.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (4 OLC), the Army Commendation Medal (2 OLC), the Army Achievement Medal (4 OLC), the Good Conduct Medal (9th award), the National Defense Service Medal with bronze service star, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Army Superior Unit Award and various service medals.

His plans include spending more time with his wife and sons, Jovonte and Larry.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Rodney K. Rollman

Rollman was born in Newport, R.I., and graduated high school in Chester, Penn. He entered the Army in September 1975. His past assignments include Fort Hood, Texas; Korea, Saudi Arabia, APG, and the Philadelphia District Recruiting Command. He culminates his career as the senior supply technician with AMC, Fort Belvoir, Va.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal (6th award), the Army Commendation Medal (5th award), the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal (3rd award), Global War on Terrorism Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Korean Service Medal and Southwest Asia Medal.

Rollman's retirement plans include working in the logistics area and spending time with his wife and daughters, Jennifer and Christy.

Award for disabled public-sector employees to Thomas Martin, an electronics technician at the U. S. Army Aberdeen Test Center who has worked at APG for more than 15 years. The committee also presented this year's Harford County Merit Award for disabled public-sector employee to Michael Graziano of APG's Directorate of Information Management, who has worked at APG for nearly 19 years. Graziano earned the same award in 2004, as well as in 1995.

Both men are graduates of the Rochester Institute of Technology, a university in upstate New York that focuses on teaching disabled students and is also the home of the National Institute for the Deaf, a higher-learning center that strives to improve teaching and learning processes for deaf students.

Sharon Grzanka, the Harford County Committee on Employment coordinator for the awards program, spoke highly of both individuals.

"The committee meets and evaluates nominations, and they [were] all outstanding, but those of Mr. Martin and Mr. Graziano stood out."

Employee of the Year

Martin, who has "severe" deafness in his left ear and "profound" deafness in the right, began working at APG during his junior year of college in 1989. He was an engineering aide under a cooperative program between RIT and the Combat Systems Test Activity, ATC's forerunner organization. He began by helping with tests of large-cal-

iber weapons.

Martin returned to school after 10 weeks, but he had so impressed his supervisor that he was encouraged to come back to APG after he finished his senior year. Upon his return in 1990, Martin again got involved with large-caliber-weapons testing, becoming a test director with an office in the CSTA headquarters building. After seven years there, he transferred to the Electro-Magnetic Interference Test Facility in what is now known as ATC, where he works to determine the impact of electromagnetic interference on radios and other electrical equipment used in military systems such as tactical vehicles.

Col. John Rooney, commander, U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, saw the progress Martin was making in promoting support of disability programs and recommended him for this award.

"Throughout his 15 years of service with the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, Mr. Martin has been a volunteer in promoting community enhancements and support of disability programs, both inside and outside of work," Rooney said in his letter of recommendation.

Martin has been deaf since birth, a condition his parents discovered when he was still quite young because they noticed he didn't respond to noises such as aircraft flying overhead. By the age of two he was wearing a "Body Aid" hearing device, an instrument with a box that is an actual hearing aid with a cord that

attaches it to a receiver in the ear.

It was a more cumbersome way to address his deafness than the miniaturized devices now available, he said, but it allowed him to hear various sounds for the first time.

"When I first had it on, I didn't understand what it was, and I kept taking it off. I couldn't speak at the time," he recalled. "It took time to get used to it."

His mother had once been a teacher, and she spent "so many hours" during his first 12 years of school helping him, Martin said. He learned to read lips during his early years, and his mother helped him with speech therapy, but he didn't learn sign language then. He attended a "regular" grade school, he said, and was treated like a "regular" student, adding that his teachers would forget he was deaf.

As he progressed through the grades however, he began to have trouble because most teachers weren't trained in sign language and often spoke to their students while facing the black board, making it impossible for Martin to read their lips. It was a problem that eventually drove down his grades.

"When I got older, before high school, that's when my grades started slipping because it was getting harder and the teacher would turn around to the blackboard," Martin recalled. "So my parents tried to figure out a way [to help him], and they thought about deaf school. I never had experienced it."

See AWARDS, page 13

First to graduate using APG/HCC agreement

Harford Community College

A former Child and Youth Services employee who came to Aberdeen Proving Ground from Germany in 2004 is the first to graduate from Harford Community College with an A.A.S. degree in Early Childhood Education.

Holly Curtsinger used credits through the new Aberdeen Proving Ground/Harford Community College Articulation Agreement. The A.A.S. in Early Childhood Education is part of the new HCCDirect program.

HCC signed an articulation agreement last October with APG Child and Youth Services. Under this agreement, child care providers working at APG who have completed specific learning experiences in the early childhood education child care industry program offered through APG Child and Youth Services will be eligible to receive a total of 21 articulated college credits from HCC applicable to the A.A.S. in Early Childhood Education.

To receive the articulated credit, APG child care workers must first complete three college-level credits with HCC. At that time, the child care worker can request a formal letter certifying completion of training through the CYS program be forwarded to Registration and Records at APG to request posting of the articulated credit.

Curtsinger completed her last courses at

HCC and also took advantage of the seven articulation courses. She also received credit for Field Placement I because she had achieved a Child Development Associate Credential. She worked in a Child Development Center to complete credits for Field Placement II.

"It is very hard for military spouses to complete college programs because of moving around all the time," Curtsinger said. "It is wonderful to find a program that works with the military. It was very rewarding."

"I was floored when I was told about the opportunity for me to work with APG's Articulation Agreement and how it would benefit me. Normally, I have run into negative situations. It was wonderful to come into a positive atmosphere at APG. I am very happy here."

To date, 16 CYS employees and FCC Providers have received an additional 21 hours of college credit based on a complete Individual Education Plan of Child Development training. The IEP consists of an 18-month foundation level child development education that is Child Development Associate based.

Curtsinger said that she plans to continue her education by pursuing a bachelor's degree.

Beverly Hartgrove, CYS, said that anyone who has previously completed the CYS training program can take advantage of the Articulation Agreement by calling a CYS trainer to get details.

APG News

The APG News, a civilian enterprise newspaper, is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the APG News are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Garrison, Aberdeen Proving Ground. The newspaper is published weekly by the APG Public Affairs Office, ATTN: IMNE-APG-PA, APG, MD 21005-5001, 410-278-1150. Printed circulation is 8,900.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the printer shall refuse to print advertising from that source.

Editorial content is prepared, edited and approved by the APG Public Affairs Office. The APG News is printed by Homestead Publishing Company, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of the Army, under exclusive written contract with APG. The civilian printer is responsible for commercial advertising. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or Homestead Publishing Company of the products or services advertised.

For advertising matters, call Homestead Publishing, 410-838-4400. Send articles or information for publication to the APG Public Affairs Office, Building 2201, IMNE-APG-PA, APG, MD 21005-5001; call the editor at 410-278-1150, DSN 298-1150; send a fax to 410-278-2570; or send e-mail to editor@apg.army.mil.

Deadline for copy is Thursday at noon for the following Thursday's paper.

Staff

APG Commander	Maj. Gen. Roger A. Nadeau
APG Garrison Commander	Col. John T. Wright
Public Affairs Officer	George P. Mercer
Editor	Debi Horne
Editorial Assistant	Marguerite Towson
Contract Photojournalists	Yvonne Johnson, Rebecca J. Chisholm
Graphic Designer/Web Designer	Blake Voshell
Web site	www.apgnews.apg.army.mil

Soldier Show story next week



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON

Framed by Pfc. Brady Sikorski of Fort Irwin, Calif., left, and Staff Sgt. Chaney Mosley, Georgia Army Reserve, right, 1st Lt. Brandy Culp of Fort Polk, La., center, sings Gretchen Wilson's "Red Neck Woman" during the 2005 U.S. Army Soldier Show at the Post Theater Oct. 30. See the Soldier Show story in next week's APG News.



Special Forces Dockside: A small tournament map which takes place during a stormy night in a run down harbor setting. Both teams must locate and secure two cargo containers containing biological agents. The first team to secure and hold both containers wins. This mission's spawn points and container locations are randomly selected each round. This mission also features breachable doors and usable automatic doors.

www.americasarmy

New version of Army game released in October

Donna Hyatt
The Fort Benning Bayonet

Following the success of the computer game “America’s Army,” a new Xbox and PlayStation 2 console version called “America’s Army, Rise of a Soldier” was unveiled Aug. 17 at Fort Benning, Ga.

Three years ago the Army released “America’s Army,” a free computer game originally created for recruiting purposes, which became an instant gaming success.

At last count, the Army estimates there are more than 5.5 million registered players of “America’s Army,” making it the fifth most popular computer game played in the world.

More gamers play on a console such as Xbox and PS2 than on a computer, said Col. Casey Wardynski, an internal consultant from the U.S. Military Academy, and Army project director for “America’s Army, Rise of a Soldier.”

The new game was designed in con-

junction with Ubisoft, a leading international developer, publisher, and distributor of interactive entertainment products.

“The PC version and the new version are different, but we took a lot of the experience and the look of the game from the PC game,” said Tony Van, the executive producer for Ubisoft. “There are some things completely unique about ‘America’s Army, Rise of a Soldier,’ but anyone who played the (computer) game will notice some things we kept from the original.”

Van said it took about one year to develop the new console-only version of the Army game.

“We did a number of motion-captures with different special forces Soldiers and filmed different locations around the world to make it as authentic as possible,” he said.

“We’ve had a number of Army personnel come through during its development,” Van said. “everyone’s remarked

how realistic it is, how authentic it is and how all the details are exactly right.”

According to Van, the new console game has a number of extra things, such as a full character model that can be created from the ground up, and the option of playing alone or as part of a team.

“You can go anywhere from recruit to special forces,” he said. “It has an open-ended career mode so a player can choose how to move through their Army career.

“You start with no skills, and as you go through the game and build up skills, you create a custom character that increases your own ability and the ability of your teammates,” Van said.

“America’s Army, Rise of a Soldier” went on sale in early October.

The original “America’s Army” game is based upon the different training schools and terrain found at Fort Benning.

“There’s a reason for that,” Wardynski said. “Many of the kids playing it are

See ARMY GAME, page 8

Web site

From front page

tion on points of contact in the Garrison Pubic Affairs Office, and PAOs in other tenant organizations.

The photo gallery will soon begin to fill up with a collection of photos not used in the newspaper because of space issues. They will be grouped by week and then by story subject.

“Because we’ve had many requests from readers for more photos taken at events, I decided to add more photos to the “Photo Gallery [in the menu bar],” Horne said.

Also, due to lack of available editorial space in the paper, there is now a direct link to the Army News Service homepage in the side bar.

“The Army News Service Web page is a great place to stay current with everything that is happening around the Army. There just isn’t enough space in the *APG News* to

cover Army News each week,” Horne said.

The “Archive” button on the menu bar still works the same, but papers are only readable by portable document format (pdf.), using Adobe Acrobat Reader 7.0, which is available for free download on the homepage. *APG News* issues are archived back to 2000.

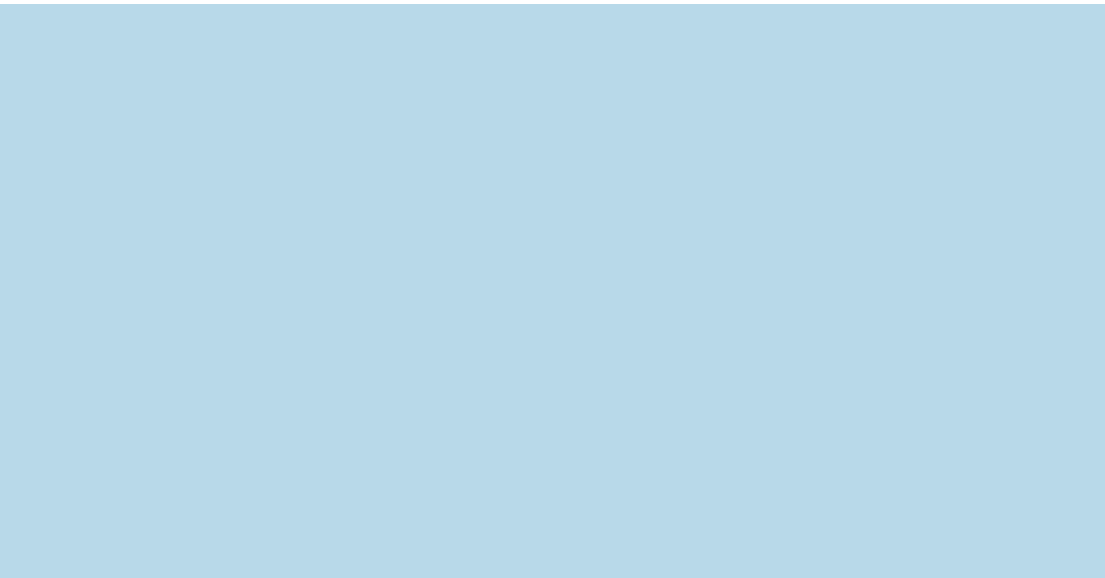
The “History” button on the menu bar hasn’t changed much, but Voshell, being a history buff, researched and found some old copies of the *APG News* predecessor, “The Flaming Bomb” from Jan. 21,

1943. This issue is now available for all history buffs to enjoy.

The other link that hasn’t changed is the “Advertise in *APG News*” button on the menu bar. This is a direct link to Homestead Publishing Company, which publishes *APG News*, for inquiries about classified advertising in the post newspaper.

“Should anyone wish to call Homestead, their number is 410-838-4400,” Horne said.

“Who knows, this new Web design may lead to a new design for the front page of the paper,” she said.



Community Notes

**THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 3
DRIVE-THRU FLU
VACCINE CLINIC**

The Harford County Health Department will hold a Drive-thru Flu Vaccine Clinic, 1 to 4 p.m., at Ripken Stadium, 873 Long Drive, Aberdeen. In case of rain, the clinic will be moved inside.

The clinic offers a flu shot for senior residents or anyone who may have difficulty walking. The cost of the vaccine is \$15 or Medicare may be billed with proof of card.

Wear a short sleeve or loose fitting shirt to allow the nurse access to the upper arm area where the shot will be given.

People with serious allergic reactions to eggs or a previous dose of influenza vaccine and people with a history of Guillian-Barre Syndrome, should talk with their doctor before being vaccinated.

For more information to specific medical questions regarding the flu vaccine, call 410-638-8460.

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 5
25YEAR CHOIR**

ANNIVERSARY
The Mt. Zion Male Choir and Pat Hector will celebrate its 25-year choir anniversary, 6 p.m. at the Oak Grove Baptist Church, 2106 Churchville Road, Bel Air. Luther Barnes and The Sunset Jubiliares along with Rev. F.C. Barnes and Company will be in concert. Admission is \$25. To purchase tickets, call 410-676-2121 or 410-272-1469.

**MONDAY
NOVEMBER 7
TOASTMASTERS MEETING**

Gunpowder Toastmasters Club 2562 will meet 11:40 a.m. at the Gunpowder Club in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Participation is open to anyone on or off the installation who wants to improve their communication, speaking and leadership skills. Lunch will be available.

For more information, call 410-734-6573 or 410-436-4109.

**TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 8
FUNDING EDUCATION
SEMINAR**

A free seminar on ‘Options in Funding Education’ will be offered by Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union, 6 to 7 p.m., Nov. 8, at the APGFCU Operations Center in Edgewood, 1321 Pulaski Highway. The Goles Investment Group will cover key topics such as tax-free growth when investing education money, Coverdell ESAs and 529 Plans, and more.

To reserve a space, call 410-893-7359 or e-mail edteam@apgfcu.com. Open to the public.

**SATURDAY
THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 10
SALUTE TO VETERANS**

AND MILITARY FAMILIES

USO of Metropolitan Washington and the Maryland Aviation Administration will hold the Second Annual Salute to Veterans and Military Families, 1 p.m. in the upper level of the International Terminal at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Keynote speaker will be COL Kenneth O. McCreedy, installation commander of Ft. George G. Meade. The event is open to veterans, military families and members of the general public, but an RSVP is required by calling 410-859-7431.

For more information, call Holly Ellison, Cheryl Stewart, Maryland Aviation Administration Communications, 410-859-7027.

**NOVEMBER 12
COUNTY OFFERS
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESSTRAINING**

The Harford County Department of Community Services is offering free Certified Emergency Response Training to eligible Harford County residents.

The three-session course will be held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Harford County Emergency Operations Center, 2220 Ady Road in Forest Hill. The course will cover basic fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue and disaster psychology along with a simulated emergency response exercise.

“The goal is to help students learn how to protect themselves and their neighbors during an emergency,” said Harford County Community Services director Mary Chance. The deadline to register is Nov. 4.

To register, call 410-638-3389 or online at www.harfordcounty.gov/volunteer.

**SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 13
BASKET BINGO**

American Legion Post 194, 336 E. Main St., Rising Sun, is sponsoring a basket bingo. Games start at 3 p.m. \$10 for 20 games.

For more information, call 410-658-3915, or e-mail basketbingo@zoominternet.net.

Proceeds will benefit Boy Scout Troop 28.

MOVIES

ADMISSION: ADULTS \$3.50, CHILDREN \$1.75
Building 3245 Aberdeen Boulevard

To verify listing, call 410-272-9008, or visit www.aafes.com and click on “Movie Listing”

FLIGHTPLAN

Friday, Nov. 4, 7 p.m.

Starring: Jodie Foster, Peter Sarsgaard, Sean Bean

After the unexpected death of her husband, airplane designer Kyle Pratt (Foster) takes her daughter, Julia, on board a state-of-the-art 474 aircraft to fly from Berlin to New York. In the middle of the nonstop flight, Julia seemingly disappears without a trace. Kyle begins to panic when the crew, including Capt. Rich (Bean) and Air Marshal Gene Carson (Sarsgaard), claim the girl never boarded the plane at takeoff. (Rated PG-13)

CORPSE BRIDE (FREE ADMISSION)

Saturday, Nov. 5, 7 p.m.

Animated

Victor, a villager in a small 19th-century European town, is taken to the underworld to marry a corpse bride. Surprisingly, the

afterlife isn't that disagreeable, and it's a lot more exciting than his strict Victorian society. Meanwhile, his live wife-to-be, Victoria, is left behind in the land of the living. (Rated PG)

EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

Saturday, Nov. 5, 9 p.m.

Starring: Laura Linney, Tom Wilkinsin, Campbell Scott, Jennifer Carpenter

A young girl (Carpenter) dies under the care of her parish priest (Wilkinson). While attending college, Emily believed she became possessed. After medical care ceases to work, she turned to her faith. In the care of her priest she dies and he goes on trial for her death. He is represented by a career-minded and driven lawyer (Linney) who does not believe in God. This is the story of Emily Rose, told by those in the trial and the priest who watched her through her possession.(Rated PG-13)

Post Shorts

Cook-book is available.
For more information, call Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Serino, 410-278-1534; Carol Baker, 410-436-2182; Gelina Adams, 410-278-5107; Georgia Braun, 410-436-5022; Kathleen Crosby, 410-278-1137; Carol Pannell, 410-436-3267; Maria Terry, 410-278-6622; and Ginger Simpson, 410-436-1408.

WACVA chapters schedule meetings

The Women’s Army Corps Veterans’ Association, Free State Chapter 70 of Aberdeen will hold its monthly meeting 11 a.m., Nov. 5, at the Aberdeen Senior Center on Franklin Street, across from Festival Park.
The meeting will include planning for the Perry Point Christmas party. For more information contact Judy Fortier, Chapter 70 president, 410-272-4115.

The Chesapeake Beacon, Chapter 114, of the WACVA will hold its monthly meeting at the Aberdeen Library, 7 Franklin Street, 10 a.m. to noon, Nov. 12. For more information, call Wanda Story at 410-272-5040 or go to Web site www.wacva.com.
All women service members, veterans and active duty, of all branches are eligible to join the WACVA as full or associate members.

NSPS ‘townhalls’ for APG

The U.S. Army Materiel Command G-1, Maureen Viall, will visit APG to conduct town hall meetings on the National Security Personnel System for all General Schedule employees at APG 8:30, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30, Nov. 14 in the Conference Center, Edgewood Area, building E-4810, and at the Post Theatre, 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., Nov. 15, building 3245. The session at 8:30 a.m., Nov. 15, will have a sign language interpreter available.

These informative meetings are to provide an overview of NSPS followed by a question and answer period. General Schedule civilians as well as military supervisors of GS civilians are encouraged to attend.

For more information, visit www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps.

Williamsburg offers military specials

Active-duty, retired, guard or reserve military personnel and their families are eligible to receive complimentary three-day admission tickets to Colonial Williamsburg for Veteran’s Day weekend, Nov. 11 to 13.

Tickets are available only at on-site Colonial Williamsburg ticket sales windows.

The service member need not be present. Free passes will be provided to immediate family members of currently deployed U.S. troops, with appropriate identification.

Colonial Williamsburg also offers special rates to military personnel and their families as honored guests at any of its five hotels, the closest lodging to Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area, museums, dining, shopping, golf, children’s activities and more.

For more information, call 1-800-HISTORY.

Veterinary clinic closings and reduced hours

The APG Veterinary Treatment Facility will be closed Nov. 11 for the Veterans Day holiday; Nov. 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving, and Nov. 30 for inventory.

Next month, the clinic will be closed Dec. 19, 23 and 26 due to staffing shortage and the Christmas break, and Dec. 30 for inventory. For more information, contact the VTF, 410-278-3911/4604.

ACS announces ‘Holiday Sponsor Program’

With the holiday season fast

approaching and the nation still fighting the War on Terrorism, the APG community is constantly reminded of the great sacrifices of the men and women in the U.S. armed forces.

During these stressful times, some military families are experiencing financial difficulties and require additional assistance. Army Community Service works closely with these families providing supportive services throughout the year. To make this holiday season a little bit brighter for some of these families, ACS is collecting donations from individuals or groups desiring to sponsor a military family.

For more information, call Arcelio V. Alleyne, ACS Financial Readiness program manager, 410-278-2450/7572, fax, 410-306-2293 or e-mail, arcelio.alleyne@usag.apg.army.mil.

Garrison unit holds coat drive

Winter is fast approaching and there are many in need of a winter coat or jacket. Help someone in need by donating a new or gently used coat to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison winter coat drive Nov. 14 through Dec. 15.

Coats, winter clothing and food items can be dropped off at Army Community Service building , the Post Chapel, the Commissary, Top of the Bay, and in buildings 4305 and 305.

Coats and clothing should be clean and food items non-perishable. Items will be donated to Harford County Social Services.


For more information, call Candace Hollingsworth, 410-278-3000 or Staff Sgt. William

Benjamin, 410-278-3539.

ID facilities closed Nov. 21

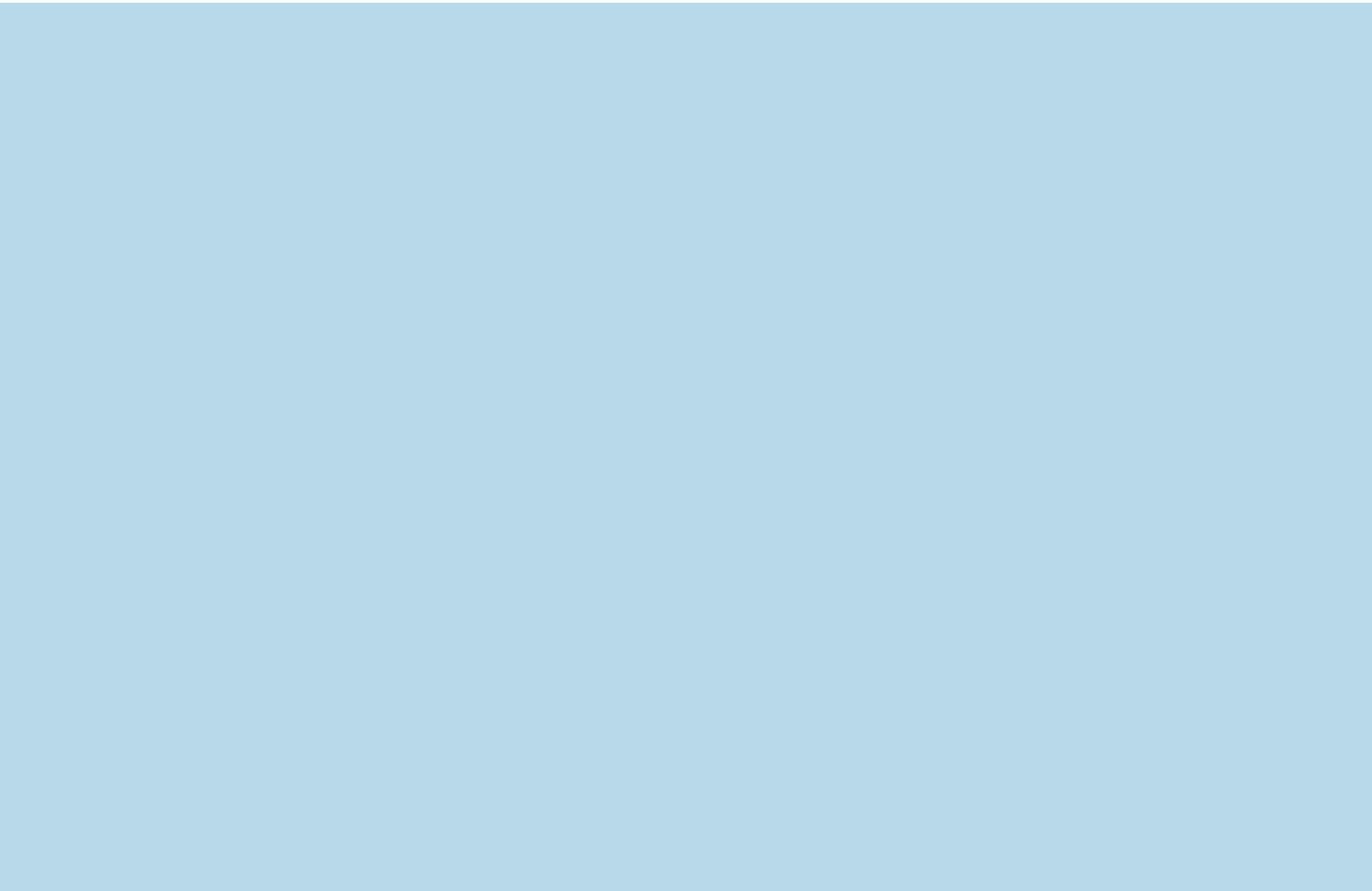
The military and civilian ID card facilities will be closed Nov. 21 due to an upgrade to the DEERS/RAPIDS comput-

er system.
Individuals should plan ahead if they have an ID card that is close to expiring. date.
This closure will not affect the vehicle registration or the secured area badging operations within the civilian ID card facility.



Chapel services

Catholic	noon
Main Post Chapel,	Protestant
8:45 a.m.	Main Post Chapel,
South Post, 10:45 a.m.	10:15 a.m.
Gospel	
Main Post Chapel,	South Post, 0915 a.m.



APG fires up Community Awareness Day



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON
Dressed in firefighting gear, APG Garrison commander Col. John T. Wright puts out a kitchen fire in the APG Fire Department's fire prevention mobile unit during the installation's first Community Awareness Day Oct. 15.

Rebecca J. Chisholm and Yvonne Johnson APG News

The first garrison wide Community Awareness day was held Oct. 15 with a wealth of displays, exhibits, events and participants.

A plethora of organizations came together to provide entertainment and education in the theme of "Kitchen Safety" for young and old attendees, including the APG Fire and Police departments; Army Substance Abuse Program office; Morale, Welfare and Recreation; Army Community Service and Child and Youth services.

Combining a number of events that happen on a yearly basis, Community Awareness Day took the place of festivals to celebrate Crime Prevention Month, Fire Safety Week, CYS Fest and the Red Ribbon Campaign.

Beginning with a Drug Free Fun Run, sponsored by the Army Substance Abuse Program, the day was filled with demonstrations, visitors, activities and games.

Throughout the day, hotdogs and drinks were served to all. At noon, the police department celebrated "McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog's" 25th anniversary with cake for everyone.

The day's major events included a martial arts demonstration; an auto rescue, an auto fire, two kitchen fires and a Christmas tree fire demonstration by the APG Fire Department; a SWAT team demo; a trench rescue put on by Harford County's Trench Rescue Squad and a free movie, "March of the Penguins," at the Post Theater.

Grand Master Irving Soto, an APG police officer and Jujitsu instructor, hosted the martial arts demonstration assisted by his long-

time student Stephen Taylor. Soto showed the crowd basic balancing and jump techniques. The highlight of the show was a demonstration of power, in which Soto broke five wooden boards with his elbow and one with his fist.

The crowd moved from there to the bleachers on Frankford Avenue to watch an auto fire demonstration during which firefighters responded to an automobile fire. The crowd cheered as firefighters exited the fire engine in full gear and extinguished the fire, seemingly in a matter of seconds.

All were invited to the rear of the station to watch the kitchen and Christmas tree fire demonstrations.

Hosted by Andre Fournier, fire prevention specialist, fire inspector T.S. Stanford and firefighter George Hollenbaugh used a mobile kitchen unit to show how easily and quickly fires can start and spread on an unmonitored stove.

"Eighty percent of fires in the home begin in the kitchen," Fournier told the crowd.

The crowd watched as heat waves rose from a pan of grease heating on the oven. A dish towel carelessly hung over the stove showed how easily kitchen fires can start.

"Most people say they 'only left the stove for a few seconds,' but as you can see it takes longer than a few seconds," Fournier said.

He added that once a fire is discovered on the stove, there are do's and don'ts that people should know.

Demonstrating this, Hollenbaugh threw a glass of water on the smoking grease, which produced a fireball of flames that quickly spread up the wall to the cabinets.

"Throwing water on a grease fire is the worst thing you can do," Fournier said, adding that "every kitchen should have a two and one-half pound fire extinguisher."

Dressed in full firefighting gear, Col. John T. Wright, APG Garrison and deputy installation commander, moved in with a hose to extinguish the kitchen fire, using training he received from the Fire Department a week prior.

Next was the Christmas tree demonstration in which the crowd learned the importance of keeping their trees watered.

Fire Prevention Inspector Doug Farrington explained that three displayed trees were cut weeks apart and had received little to no water.

"Folks don't realize the trees they buy in December were cut in the summer," he said. "It's important that your tree gets water everyday."



Photo by Rebecca J. Chisholm
"Nothing Up My Sleeve's" Spongebob Squarepants entertains attendees.



Photo by HOWARD KASH
Tyler Kash, 3, son of Howard Kash, a computer scientist at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory, gets first-hand soccer instruction from Baltimore Blast player Billy Nelson.

He added that consumers should cut one inch off the trunk of the tree before placing it in water.

Using a hand torch, firefighters had difficulty lighting the first two trees which had received water, but the third, which was totally dry, went up quickly.

"As soon as the needles start falling on your floor, it's time to get that tree out of your home," Farrington said.

Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Elvis Irby, who also trained with the Fire Department, extinguished the tree fire.

Parents and children all seemed to enjoy the day. Brad Provenza, a U.S. Army Test Center employee, said he attended the fire prevention week activities last year with his wife Stephanie and son Joey, 5.

"They really had great activities," Provenza said. "This is a really well done event, very educational and fun."

"The day was wonderful," added Gina Smith, a family child care provider who was out with her daughter Brittany, 11 and son Brandon, 3.

"You can see they really thought about the kids because they had a lot of activities for them," she said.

Staff Sgt. Mike Aloisi, 389th Army Band (AMC's Own), said that he, his wife and five children "had a great time."

"We stayed busy. There was something to do all day," Aloisi said, adding that his children, ages 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, enjoyed the arts and craft activities and the helicopters the most.

"I hope everyone appreciated the band's Jazz Combo," Aloisi added. "They threw it together in just a couple of days so they could participate."

The Jazz Combo included Sgts. Sean David McGoran on flugelhorn, Curtis Kerns on keyboard, Daniel Moyer on drums, and Spcs. Rudolfo Fortado on bass and David Jimenez on guitar.

Other activities included the Child and Youth Services bounce house; various booths with arts, crafts and safe cooking projects and "Nothing Up My Sleeve," who provided "Sponge Bob Squarepants," balloon critters, body art and face painting.

Youth Sports sponsored a Golf Long Drive Contest, Football Throw, Soccer Shoot Out and Standing Long Jump competition, offering prizes in numerous age categories.

The Police Station and Fire House were open for tours.

Upon entry, participants signed in and were given a raffle ticket. Prizes were drawn throughout the day, and those whose names who were drawn did not have to be present to win. Prizes included a number of kitchen safety objects and toys for the younger winners.



Photo by REBECCA J. CHISHOLM
"Nothing Up My Sleeve's" stilt walker towers over the other entertainment.



Photo by REBECCA J. CHISHOLM
The APG fire department's crew disassembles a car during the auto extraction demo.



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON
APG firefighters use teamwork to extinguish a fire during the Auto Fire Demonstration.



Photo by REBECCA J. CHISHOLM
The APG Garrison's Command Sgt. Maj. Elvis Irby saws the windshield to remove it during the vehicle extraction demonstration.



Photo by REBECCA J. CHISHOLM
The 389th Army Band (AMC's Own) Jazz Combo provides musical entertainment during the Community Awareness day festivities. From left, Sgt. Curtis Kerns, Sgt. Daniel Moyer, Spc. Rodolfo Fortado, Sgt. David Jimenez and Sgt. Sean-David McGoran.



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON
APG Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Elvis Irby puts out the fire.



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON
Flames leap from a burning Christmas tree ignited by firefighters to demonstrate how easily un-watered trees can become fire hazards.



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON
Grandmaster Irving Soto of the APG Police breaks wooden boards with his elbow, then with his fist, as his longtime student Stephen Taylor holds them steady and demonstrates jump techniques during the martial arts demonstration.

Visit
APG News
online at
www.apgnews.apg.army.mil

LEAVE DONATION

To participate in the Voluntary Leave Program, use forms OPM 630, Application to Become a Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program; OPF 630-A, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (within agency); and

OPM 630-B, Request to Donate Annual Leave to Leave Recipient Under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (outside agency). Employees leaving the program should call Ronda McKinney, 410-278-8988, or e-mail rondamckinney@usag.apg.army.mil, to complete a termination form.

Employees eligible for donations in the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

Michele Amrhein
Marian Bellis (fracture of left tibia)
Dianna Blevins
Leroy Carter
Barbara Cascio
Steven Clarke
Barbara Crossley
Lola Daniels
Carl Davis
Shelia Davison (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo)
Geraldine Eaton
Gregory Fox
Renee Gaffney
Susan Gorhan
Melanie A. Hoffman (parasinusitis, fibromyal-

gia condition)
Richard Hoffman
Lydia Langley
Michael Lewis
Patricia Lynch
Wayne Kaiser
Beverly King (caring for husband)
Priscilla Kelly
Danny Kopp (lung cancer)
William B. McLean (kidney failure)
Sandra Miller
Mary Pettitway
Donna Puckett
Tess Ramos (total hip replacement)

Boyd Richards
Cheryl L. Roark
James Royston
Leigh Sanders
Barbara Seker
Steven Sheely
Linda Shoaf
Tomika Silver
Alison Tichenor
Linda Tignor
Charles Young (kidney and pancreas transplant)
Gary Tudor (heart valve replacement)
Jerry Williams
Sharon Woods
Billie Wooten
Gerard Yursis

Idol

From front page

in the competition’s top five.

Willens performed last that evening, something that he had hoped would allow him to leave a good impression on the audience.

During an interview before the rehearsal for his performance that night, he stood outside the theatre unable to hear the performances before him. Even with his understandable performance and understandable nervousness, Willens was candid about the idol experience and his luck so far.

“This is a ‘hurry up and wait’ ordeal,” he said. “I’ve just been craving information on what the other folks have been singing and how they have fared.”

A lot of the singers sang rhythm and blues and gospel tunes, and were good at it, he added. But, hopefully as a classic rock singer, Willens could differentiate himself from the pack.

Glad to have had made it into the top 16, Willens said, his particular group of eight was the tougher of the two, in his eyes.

Wearing a favorite button down shirt he wore in the local finals for the performance that evening, he nervously waited his turn to sound check, and sing on stage with a backing track, for the first time in the final competition.

And, fearing the worst, he noted that even if he were to be cut that evening, there was

always the chance of being selected as the wild card singer, and making it into the top five.

But, even if he did not make it, Willens said, he hoped he’d be able to maintain a positive attitude and continue participating in the competition as a group singer for the finale show.

“This is just good for morale,” he said.

Also good for Willens himself could be the chance to be selected for a future Soldier Show, and the opportunity to serve his country and fellow Soldiers.

As the Soldier before him finished, Willens’ nervousness was apparent.

“It’s like when you’re standing in line for a roller coaster--you see it go up and hear people screaming--then you go down that first hill. There’s nothing you can do but scream and try to stay in tune while screaming. You get that edge right before you go on and you either consume it or it consumes you,” he said.

That evening, Willens performed “Don’t Stop Believing” by Journey, a song that Steve Perry’s incredible vocal range made nearly impossible for other singers. To perform it, Willens had the key lowered a step in order to hit all the high notes with more ease.

The crowd reacted with incredible enthusiasm, but the judges, unfortunately did not have the same reaction.

Country music artist Michael Peterson questioned whether Willens had a vocal coach, as he was right at the top of his range on this partic-

ular song.

“I think you’ve got a wonderful voice,” Tilley said.

Byrd echoed Tilley, commenting on how much she enjoyed the sound of Willens’ voice.

No amount of crowd reaction or judges’ enthusiasm or criticism could place Willens in the top five. Not only were the other contestants in his group of eight fantastic performers, but the overall winner of the competition came from this group.

After being cut, Willens continued on in Georgia, practicing and learning songs for the final performances done as a group. And, he got to enjoy a private hotel room, as did all of the officers participating in the contest.

And, no matter how it ended, Willens knew all along that the exposure and experience he would get while competing would be good for him as a singer and a professional.

Willens was hoping he would be able to maintain that perspective, as he had another important performance defending his Ph.D. dissertation at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh on Oct. 26. His work on the absorption of pesticides across the skin of amphibians was defended successfully.

“The blessing in disguise is that I got to return to Matthew (his 12-week old son) and the rest of the family after two weeks.”

Plus, as Willens put it, “It was better than a day at the office.”

Army game

From page 3

going to come in the Army, and we want them to feel like they’ve been here before. Like they’re hitting the ground running. They’ve captured everything down to the dirt.”

“Fort Benning has an interesting history with the game because the PC version takes a player through basic training. He can even go to Airborne School and Ranger school,” said Maj. Randy Zeegers, of the 20th Special Forces Group,

Alabama National Guard.

“As he goes through different schools, he is able to play different levels,” he said.

A new Internet download for “America’s Army” called “Overmatch” will also come out in the fall.

“It’s designed to show the overmatch capabilities the Army has, like Javelin missiles and all the stuff the enemy can’t bring to bear,” Wardynski said.

“America’s Army” can be downloaded free of charge at www.americasarmy.com.



Morale, Welfare & Recreation

Soldiers laugh it up to on duty comics

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

The Comics on Duty World Tour made a stop at Aberdeen Proving Ground for two shows at the Post Theater Oct. 23.

The Soldiers of the 16th Ordnance Battalion laughed it up to jokes and vignettes shared by the show's four stars, Steve Bills, Paul Riley, Tom Irwin and James P. Connolly.

Interacting with their audience, each comic brought up stories or threw out comments that the young Soldiers easily identified with.

"I don't understand your language, is that Marines?" asked Riley after the Soldiers let out a loud 'Hooah,' to which they responded with an even louder 'No!'

Former Soldier Irwin talked about basic training, swearing, port-a-potties and Baghdad, to which he found several areas of agreement.

"I just loved basic training. Two months of no chicks and some guy yelling at me. Wow," Irwin said.

Irwin received a huge ovation when he asked for a round of applause "for the men and women not with us tonight."

Connolly closed the show with a wit reminiscent of 'The Fonz' from the TV serial 'Happy Days.'

"I'm selling the 'spin' today," Connolly said, explaining how he perfected a way "to convince yourself of anything and make everything go your way."

"No matter what anyone says to you just spin it back," he said.

"For example, say your boss confronts you when you're late to work. When he says 'you're late,' just say, 'Technically that's not true 'cause I wasn't trying to be on time.'"

The audience roared throughout the performances and several said they'd like to see the show again.

"They were great," said Pvt. James Johnson, Company A, 16th Ordnance Battalion. "I like the last guy the most but they were all funny."

"They had military back-

grounds and that made a difference," added Pvt. Malaya Morris.

Pvt. Walter McDowel, Company B, 16th, said that listening to material the comics have shared with troops in Iraq and Afghanistan made a difference as well.

"I liked the whole show and the fact that they've been overseas with it," McDowel said

"This was first rate entertainment by people who repeatedly go in harms way to entertain our troops in the War on Terror," said Earlene Allen, MWR senior programmer.

The Comics-on-Duty World Tour is produced exclusively for the military community by Richard Davis, executive producer of the Davis Entertainment Group.

Since 1992, the CODWT has performed more than 1,700 shows worldwide, for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, including more than 200 in Iraq in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, entertaining thousands of military personnel.

Activities

Registration

Register for any MWR event by visiting the specific facility for the event, mailing in a registration form found in an MWR Program Brochure, visiting MWR Registration, building 3326, or visiting online at www.apgmwr.com.

Daytona Race specials

Three specials are being offered for race weekend, Feb. 16 through 19 in Daytona. The last day to purchase tickets is Dec. 16.

GREAT AMERICAN RACE WEEKEND is a two-day package including one ticket for both the Daytona 500 and Hershey's Kissables 300 Busch races for \$103.28 per person (regularly \$162).

The seats are located on the superstretch in Allison, Lund or turn 2 sections.

ALL AMERICAN OFFER includes one seat for the Daytona 500 and one Daytona 500 hat for \$102.25 per person (regularly \$132)

The seats are located on the superstretch in Allison, Lund or turn 2 sections.

NEXTEL FANZONE PASS for the Daytona 500 race only costs \$75 per person (regularly \$90).

For more information or to

purchase tickets, visit MWR Registration, Tickets, & Leisure Travel, building 3326, call 410-278-4907/4011 or e-mail mwr_registration@usag.apg.army.mil.

Forever Swing's Zoot Suit

The Lyric Opera House will present Forever Swing's Zoot Suit, 2 p.m., Nov. 26. Tickets cost \$54. From the creators of Forever Swing comes an all new swing musical. It's a full on stage orchestra, talented singers, and high energy swing kids.

The last day to purchase tickets is Nov. 10.

Fall special at Ruggles

Ruggles Golf Course offers nine holes with a cart and a bucket of range balls, starting at noon on Mondays through Fridays for \$18.50. The special lasts through Nov. 30 and does not include holidays.

For more information, call Dave Correll at 410-278-4794.

Radio City Christmas spectacular

Travel to New York City to see the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular featuring the Rockettes. Tickets for performances on Nov. 19, Dec.

3, 10 and 17 cost \$121. After the show, there will be time for holiday shopping.

2005-06 cheerleading program

Registration at Aberdeen and Edgewood Youth centers will be held through Nov. 10. Eligible youths include ages 6 through 15 as of Dec. 31, 2005. Youths must be a CYS member, and can join at \$18 per year. Cost is \$40.

The Youth Cheerleading program will perform cheers for the Youth Basketball teams. The program is open to eligible youths of active military, reserves, retired military and DoD civilians. Practices are held twice a week and games will be held on Saturdays.

Practices begin the week of Nov. 28, and games are every Saturday in January through mid-March.

Volunteer coaches are also needed in order to conduct the program. For more information or to volunteer, call Bill Kegley at 410-306-2297.

The Edgewood program registration will be held at building E-1902, Scully Road.

For an appointment, call CYS central registration, 410-278-7571/7479.

LIBRARY BOOK CORNER

Operating hours of the Aberdeen Library, building 3320, are 1 to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday and 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday. For more information, call 410-278-3417.

The following is a list of some new items available at the APG MWR Library:

A Wedding in December by Anita Shreve

Reconciliation and regret underlie an emotional reunion of seven former classmates from the Kidd Academy, an elite prep school, who gather at an inn in the Berkshire Mountains for a wedding. Operating with a heightened sense of their mortality, the former classmates regard each other's life decisions with a mixture of envy, wariness and spite.

The Scorpion's Gate by Richard A. Clarke

The former White House counterterrorism advisor presents a story set in 2001 where a revolution in Saudi Arabia leads the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to try to destabilize the Persian Gulf, attacking U.S. facilities, all in the interest of establishing Shiite hegemony in the region. Two Chinese carrier task groups deploy to the Persian Gulf to deliver nuclear warheads to the hard-line group that is running the former Saudi Arabia and to secure China's oil supplies, while a corrupt U.S. Secretary

of Defense conspires to usurp command over the military.

Predator by Patricia Cornwell

Dr. Kay Scarpetta, now freelancing with the National Forensic Academy in Florida, takes charge of a case that stretches from steamy Florida to snowbound Boston, one as unnerving as any she has ever faced.

Son of a Witch by Gregory Maguire

In this sequel to "Wicked," when the Wicked Witch of the West is unceremoniously dispatched by that girl from Kansas, 14-year-old Liir has nowhere to go and nothing meaningful to do. He has the witch's cape and broom but no magical abilities, and the question of his parentage is now more than bothersome.

The library's Web site www.apgmwr.com/recreation/libraries.html provides access to the library's online catalog and also has a complete annotated listing of the library's new material, as well as a list of available films on DVD.

SCHOOL LIAISON

Parent Forum tonight

A Parent forum will take place 5:30 to 8 p.m., Nov. 3, at Aberdeen High School for parents of students in Bakerfield, Church Creek, Churchville, George D. Lisby Elementary at Hillsdale, Hall's Cross Roads, Havre de Grace Elementary, Meadowvale and Royce-Williams Elementary schools.

For more information, call Mike Seymour, supervisor of Equity and Cultural Diversity, 410-273-5678.

Letter to APG parents:

When students can read, I mean be able to read well at or above their grade level, they have the skills to achieve success in all other courses.

Reading is like doing push-ups: instead of exercising the physical, you exercise the mental-your mind. We are encouraging students at all grade levels to read after school a minimum of 30 minutes three times per week. Of course, we encourage students to read more and exceed the standard, but if you are an APG student in 1st through 12th grade and want to participate in the 'Star Reader' program, just give me a call at 410-278-2857 to sign up and get more information. This is an incentive awards program.

Interested in mentoring? Give me a call if you are interested in mentoring a student at school in elementary, middle, or high school. The need is there and we can always use your help and support.

Here is a letter to a [APG military] parent with a question about taking pictures at Harford County Public School functions. This information pertains to all parents. The letter is from Don Morrison, director of Public Information, Harford County Public Schools, 410-273-5678.

"Dear APG Parent:

The policy of prohibiting photos being taken at school by anyone without specific permission of parents was put in place to protect the privacy of all students. When people take photos of children in school, we have no idea for what purpose they may be used.

In this day of Web blogging and instantane-

ous transmission of images (photos which can be altered using various photo programs), the situation becomes even more potentially threatening.

You likely received a photo/news/Internet release form at the beginning of the school year. If you signed that form giving your permission for your child's image/information to be released, the school is provided with permission for the photos to be taken of your child by news media, other parents, etc.

However, in a classroom (or school) it is highly unlikely that all parents gave that permission.

If your child could be isolated, or only those who received parental permission for photo releases could be the ones of which photos were taken, taking pictures could be allowed. That's what we do if the media comes to a school to take photos.

I'm assuming the activity of which you speak is one in which all children at the school (or in your child's class) were involved -- that's what makes it difficult to allow photos to be taken.

I'm copying your message to the school principal and to the Executive Director of Elementary Education who may have more to add.

I'm also copying Ivan Mehosky, who acts as liaison between the school system and the Army at APG.

Please continue to support your child at school, and the school system will do its best to make your visits enjoyable.

This year's Parent-Student Handbook, specifically pages 14 and 15, which you should have received at the beginning of the year, will give you an explanation of the regulations under the "Privacy Act"--Buckley Amendment of 1974--under which schools must operate to guarantee the confidentiality of students while at school.

Thanks, again, for your support and for your service to our country."

Ivan Mehosky
APG School Liaison
410-278-2857

Equipment Resource Center

Let MWR tune your skis
and boards this year.
Don't Own?
We rent too!

It is time for ski/snowboard services for personal equipment.

Hot Waxing \$10
Hot wax and edging \$15
Waxing, edging, and base p-tex repairing \$20

For more information, please contact Outdoor Recreation Equipment Resource Center at 410-278-4124/5789, or by e-mail outdoor.recreation@usag.apg.army.mil, or visit our website www.apgmwr.com.

\$5 OFF
waxing, edging, and base p-tex
repair package.

offer expires 9 December 2005

MWR services are available to
ALL DOD ID Cardholders



Veterans' voices



Physical therapist Mike O'Brien, left, looks on as World War II veteran Ralph Butler enjoys a back massage in an Aqua Massage water therapy chair in the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home rehabilitation center Oct. 20.



One of three tastefully decorated dayrooms in the Charlotte Hall Veterans home is for use by residents and their guests.



Physical and occupational therapy equipment fills the rehabilitation center which is manned by a certified physical therapist and is open to all occupants of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.



Marine Corps emblems on a blanket and pillow in a typical private room in the Charlotte Hall nursing home unit give the room the occupant's personal touch.

Charlotte Hall veterans make themselves at home Maryland's only veterans home holds open house

Story and photos by
Yvonne Johnson
APG News

The Charlotte Hall Veterans Home welcomed veterans, spouses and family members to the first open house held in the facility's 25-year history Oct. 20.

Located on a picturesque campus in St. Mary's County, the home houses 500 veterans in its nursing home, assisted living, full-time care, Alzheimer's and hospice facilities.

"It is the only veterans home in the state of Maryland," said Laura Cosgrove, marketing director, adding that the facility accepts veterans and non-veteran spouses as residents.

The day included health care displays for visitors and tours of the facility. Hospice of St. Mary's, Heritage Health, and Regional Mobile Dental, as well as the Social Security Administration, and the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery and Memorials Programs set up displays and information booths.

Garry Brown, Prince Georges County veteran services officer, said he comes to Charlotte Hall to man the once a week VA clinic.

"We routinely answer inquiries about home loan guarantees, claims filing, VA cemeteries

and others," Brown said.

A veteran of the Navy, the Army National Guard, and the Baltimore County Police Department, Brown also serves the VA offices in Wheaton and Greenbelt.

Steven L. Wynn, Charlotte Hall administrator, and retired Army major, led tours of the facility throughout the day.

Visitors toured the dining rooms, medical clinics, barber shop, library, and private and semi-private rooms as well as therapeutic facilities that included whirlpool bath tubs and a fully-equipped physical therapy gym.

"We have a 95 percent male population," Wynn said as he guided visitors through two rooms reserved for females with an adjoining bathroom.

"But that will change as we move forward," he added noting that the building, which was constructed in 1985, will be undergoing renovations to accommodate its changing population.

Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses are on hand around the clock to tend to residents, Wynn noted.

"All must be certified to work around our patients and residents including the housekeeping staff," he said.

"Our residents are very happy here," he said. "We encourage everyone to bring personal items and think of this as their home."

"The 126-acre facility includes a walking track, outdoor water faucets and a pond stocked with perch and trout.

In addition, a bus transports residents to the mall, to shows, bowling alleys and to Patuxent Naval Air Station. Every wing is connected so there is no need to go out into the weather," he added.

"Independence is the key here," he said. "We encourage residents to do for themselves and we help those who can't."

Decorations with military themes can be found throughout the building.

Wynn said that local veterans organizations, scout troops and others are regular volunteers at the home.

"We welcome any group that wants to do something for our people, whether it's baking cookies or putting on a show," Wynn said. "Everyone here has given up something to serve our country. We try to give something back."

Ralph and Maxine Butler said they came to tour Charlotte Hall because they are considering applying for residency. A World War II

Navy veteran, Ralph said he was "very impressed" with what he saw.

"I've been through Bethesda but this is far more complete," he said. "It seems to have the family type atmosphere we're looking for."

Janina Serafin, weekend administrator in the hall's hospice unit, said that residents and family members are "well cared for."

"If I could live here I would," Serafin said. "Most people here realize how good they have it. We do what's necessary to ensure everyone is taken care of."

Charlotte Hall is a program of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, operated under contract with the state of Maryland by Health Management Resources of Maryland, LLC. It has a nursing long-term care facility for Maryland veterans and eligible spouses who are unable to take care of themselves due to age or disability.

The home provides the support and services required for shelter, sustenance, medical care, and social services necessary to maintain the resident's medical condition and quality of life. When able to, the home endeavors to improve the residents' medical condition with a view to restoring independence and returning them to the community.

Awards

From page 2

His mother's persistence led her to discover the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles, a private, nonprofit educational center for the deaf founded by the wife of actor Spencer Tracy in 1942 and named for the couple's son, who was afflicted with childhood deafness. For his high-school education, his parents looked to various other institutions that accommodate students with disabilities.

"My parents tried different places, like one in the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf near Philadelphia and one in Frederick, Maryland, and one in D.C.," he said.

The Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick seemed like a good choice, but he couldn't gain admission because he was a Pennsylvania resident at the time, so he opted for Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., which has a Model Secondary School for the Deaf, known to be a leading institution for providing education and professional development for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

"That's when I started learning sign language and meeting new friends," he recalled. "My grades went way up. Four out of 95 students earned a golden honorable, and I was one of the four. I was much happier because I wasn't missing any information."

At Gallaudet, he also met a deaf woman who would one day become his wife, and she also attended RIT in Rochester. They now have four children, none of whom are deaf.

The people at the EMI Test Facility have been very helpful to him and very patient with him, Martin said, calling it a great place to work.

"Mike Geiger [his EMI manager] and the other people are good to me," he said. "They know how to talk to me one-on-one. If there is a small meeting, I remind everybody to please talk one at a time because sometimes, when more than one person is talking at a time, I miss things." His fellow employees are always reminding themselves of that, he added.

In 2001, Martin lost all of the hearing that he had gained with a hearing aid, and he began to have dizzy spells. He was in bed for an entire week, and his doctor diagnosed Meniere's disease, a disorder of the inner ear associated with a change in the volume of fluid inside a portion of the inner ear called the labyrinth. Symptoms include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, unsteadiness, a sense of fullness in the ear, ringing in the ear (tinnitus),

headache, abdominal discomfort and hearing loss, which can increase if the disease progresses.

He tried a more powerful hearing aid to restore his hearing, but it didn't work, so he underwent a cochlear implant in his left ear about a year-and-a-half ago. The softest sound he had been able to hear with a regular hearing aid was about 35 decibels, he said. That's about the level of sound in a quiet office. The implant enables him to hear some sounds that are even softer.

"It takes time to get used to the new sounds," he said. "It's amazing. One time when I was in the living room watching TV, I turned everything off, and I could hear something ticking. It was a clock with regular AA batteries. When I was driving during rain, I could hear the tapping on the windshield. It was so sensitive. I'm not used to it."

In addition to getting used to softer sounds, he also has had to adjust to a 60-hour weekly work schedule, in 12-hour shifts alternating between day and night. It is a schedule necessitated by current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it won't let up in the foreseeable future, he said.

Merit Employee of the Year

Graziano, who has been deaf since he was six months old, has undergone childhood experiences very similar to those of Martin. He attended the Saint Joseph Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, Mo., from 1968 to 1974, before he was "mainstreamed" into the Pine Grove Middle School in Parkville, Md. He then transferred to Dulane High School in Timonium, Md., to complete his last 3 years of school.

"I was selected as school yearbook photographer in my senior year," he recalled.

Graziano received no sign-language interpretation during his middle-school and high-school years, but he did have a tutor to help him. After being admitted to RIT in 1979, he received full support for tutoring, note-taking and sign-language interpreter services. He received an associate degree in data processing in 1982 and was transferred to the College of Applied Science and Technology. He received his bachelor's degree in computer systems from RIT in 1985.

When he came to APG almost two decades ago, the U.S. Army Materiel Command hired him as a computer programmer. The APG Directorate of Information Management selected him as a senior Web developer and consultant several years later. Among other current duties, he maintains and updates APG's Web site and the Web site of APG's Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

In addition the Defense Department's Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program provides interpreters and assistive devices for him. Graziano said the DOIM has also made it easier to do his work, and his co-worker, Bernie Weed, is willing to work with him daily to assist in getting the mission accomplished.

Like Martin, he received a cochlear implant in his left ear four years ago at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

"I learned to hear new sounds and voices," Graziano said.

The cochlear implant helps him control his vocals, he added. Graziano finds the time to volunteer for community service at APG, where he serves on the APG Committee for the Disabled and as chairperson of its Education Committee. His committee activities include making sure the APG commander's "town hall meetings" have open captioning for the hearing impaired, and ensuring that all video products produced by the DOIM are also open-captioned.

"I normally reject any video without captions for the Web pages," he said. "I also make the effort to encourage county fire departments to include persons with disabilities in the statewide Disaster Exercise Drill."

He is convinced the federal government isn't doing enough to hire people with disabilities, and he cited a flyer that appeared on the Web site of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Government, one of the organizations that represent a coalition of qualified people with disabilities who seek government employment. According to the flyer's statistics, the federal workforce in general declined by some 7.33 percent between 1993 and 2002. The workforce with disabilities, according to the flyer Graziano cited, declined by 12.49 percent during the same time period.

"After almost 19 years, I believe that the federal government needs to hire more deaf and hard of hearing people," he said. "APG [does not have enough] full-time permanent sign-language interpreters to meet our needs."

But there are some signs of progress, he added. "The Federal Relay Service helps deaf and hard-of-hearing federal employees to service customers," he explained. "DOIM is willing to loan me to work with the Combined Federal Campaign's 2005 and 2006 programs."

When asked what advice he would give to people who have never experienced a disability themselves, he replied, "Take sign language classes. Don't be afraid to meet a person with a disability."